

THE
NARRATIVE.

By Samuel Fancourt.

*He that answereth a Matter before he heareth it, it is Folly
and Shame unto him.*

SOLOMON.

*You yourselves know, that these Hands have ministered unto my
Necessities, and to them that were with me.*

ST. PAUL.

*Qui aliquid Statuet, parte inauditâ alterâ,
Licet æquum Statuerit, haud æquus fuerit.*

ETHNICUS.

LONDON: Printed in the Year MDCCXLVII.

S I R,

London, June 24, 1747.

I Entreat you to read, with your usual Candour and Impartiality, the following
NARRATIVE. It is design'd as a Sort of an Appeal unto an equal Judge,
who has too great Penetration to be deceiv'd by Imposture; and withal too great
Humanity, not to countenance oppressed Innocence. — If my Life shall appear to be
in a Manner, one continued, and patient Struggle, to support, by an honest In-
dustry, myself and a frugal, virtuous Wife, under a long Train of Calamities,
from my Entrance almost into public Life, to this very Day; who knows but I
may find in you, Sir, a generous Advocate and Patron!

Who am, with the greatest Esteem,

S I R,

Your most devoted and oblig'd

Humble Servant, &c.

The Narrative.

I.

MY Grandfather lived in *Rutland*, and serv'd his Country with Reputation, both in the Capacity of High-Sheriff and that of a Justice of Peace. — My Father, his Younger Son, was bred up in the Establish'd Church; but being won over by the amiable Conversation of his Wife, became a Protestant Dissenter, and the chief Support of the Dissenting Interest at *Okeham*, where he set up the Business of a *Country Mercer*.

He had four Sons and two Daughters. Two Sons he brought up to the Ministry, at his own Expence. The other two he bred to Trades. One of these he set up at *Wellingborough*, twenty Miles from the Place where he liv'd. The other was instructed in his own Business, and continued with him. I was the first that married, and this at a Time, when all the rest were grown up to be Men and Women. — As Money was now wanted to carry on my Father's Business with greater Vigour and Advantage, I lent him my Wife's Fortune, and all I had besides, upon his own Bond and that of his two trading Sons, with the Reversion of his Dwelling-House as an additional Security. — I thought myself very safe, and encouraged to do so by that Apostolic Precept, to *shew Piety at Home, and to requite our Parents; for that, says the Apostle, is good and acceptable before God.*

But, alas! his Son at *W* — being a pashing young Man, and having but a slender Fortune, drew upon himself the Envy of the Trade, and brought his own Affairs into Confusion. This caused a Run of his Creditors upon him. He stood about 20 Arrests, and two or three Executions; and found Means to persuade his distant Father and Brother Tradesman to be obligated for almost all his Debts, even after they were contracted. And thus a very reputable and honest Family were sunk at once, notwithstanding all that we two Brother Ministers had done, or could further do, to save it, whether by advancing more Money ourselves, or suffering Money to be rais'd upon the real Security I once had.

We were both sent for; and came, the one from *Newcastle upon Tyne*, the other from *Hungerford*; and took a Journey on Purpose to *London*, to offer their Creditors upon Oath all they had, if they would accept it for their Debts. The Creditors seem'd to comply readily with the Proposal, even that Creditor of my Brother's, who yet, during this Treaty, took an Advantage which the Law gave him, to seize all my Father's Effects. — The Sheriff soon cried a public Sale, and sold the best of the Goods to his own and the Bailiffs Friends, for little or nothing. Upon this melancholy News I rode down from *London*; and tho' I bought the Remains at a much dearer Price than others; yet I cleared upon the Spot about fifty Pounds, besides what I left behind to provide Bread for a distressed Family. — With this small Sum, and what I after saved out of a kind Legacy left me, and out of the Board and Tuition of about half a Dozen Gentlemen's Sons, I bought an Annuity for my Wife of 24*l.* per Annum in *Mercers Company*, the Benefit of which Annuity (should she survive me) she is, I fear, like to lose also.

II.

I AFTERWARDS removed to *Salisbury*; where my People prevail'd upon me to mix some of their Children, as Day-Scholars, with the young Gentlemen under my Roof. This brought a Disorder into my little School, and ruin'd that too. — My Money being thus lost and sunk, and my School at an End, I frequently represented the Case to some of my Brethren in Town; and assured them it was impossible for me in those Circumstances, to subsist at *Salisbury*, without a greater Salary than my People were willing to raise. I may appeal to my present Successor, whether he has more than a bare Competency among them; tho' he has twenty Pounds a Year more than they latterly allow'd me, and has no Loss of his Wife's Fortune to complain of. However, my Salary being above 30*l.* per Annum, no stated Augmentation could be obtained from the Fund; nor seldom any occasional Assistance from thence, without a Journey to *London*, the Expences of which Journey eat up the greatest Part of what they were pleas'd to allow.

My People, it may be said, ought to have exerted themselves, and done better, especially for one who, in Neglect of his own, had serv'd their Interest to such a Degree. For you must know, Sir, Tho' when I came first to *Salisbury*, they had paid above 20*l.* a Year, twenty Years running, for their Place of public

Worship; yet before I left them, that Place of Worship was, chiefly thro' my Assistance and Activity, not only bought and paid for; but a commodious *Dwelling-House* was built also, and both settled in Trust, without a Farthing Debt upon either. To take no Notice of their aged Poor, who were kept (partly thro' my Means) out of the Workhouse built in my Time, by a Monthly Collection; and had a growing Stock for extraordinary Exigences. But as these Things drew from my People several Sums for the Purposes above mentioned, my own Subscriptions were rather sunk than rais'd higher. Besides, the Deficiencies occasioned by Deaths, the Failure of some, and the Removal of others fell also mostly upon me. *

III.

I THEREFORE, for the Ease of my People, and with the Approbation of some of the Chief of them, contriv'd a *Circulating Library* for the Entertainment of distant, as well as home Subscribers, in Imitation of *Leake's* at the Bath, for the Season. I propos'd it to a Bookseller in *Salisbury* for our mutual Advantage. He came into the Scheme. It was to be carried on wholly in the *Bookseller's Name*, who was to have half the Profits, tho' I procur'd, perhaps, nine Subscribers to his one, and conducted the Affair in private. We set out at twenty Shillings a Year each Subscriber. But he soon broke thro' the Articles of Agreement, in several Instances; and at the Year's End broke off his Partnership, reduced the Subscription from twenty Shillings to ten; and got his Bookseller in *London*, who supply'd us with Books, to sell them all to himself, that he might engross the Library into his own Hands; and this, tho' we both stood equally obliged to pay for those Books, or to allow a certain *Premium* for the Use of them; for we had them upon that Condition. His own Friends, upon an Arbitration, adjudged me Damages, which I desired might be moderated by Equity mixed with Clemency.

This Treatment, however, forced me, much against my Inclinations, to open a *Circulating Library* in my own Name; and to sink the Subscription also to ten Shillings a Year. Some Books I was obliged to buy out-right; others I had leave to return upon a *Premium*. The Collection was large, and the Books well chosen. But I soon found it would not answer, at that low Price, without a much larger Number of Subscribers, but rather brought me into Debt. In this Perplexity I extended the Library to remoter Places, and applied to my *London Brethren* for their Assistance.

IV.

SOME few Subscriptions I obtained; but was encouraged to expect more powerful Supports, could I make my Library of *standing Use*, particularly to Ministers in the Country round about. The Motion came first from an eminent Doctor, deceased. † He directed me to an experienced Counsellor for Advice. A Plan was drawn up, and agreed upon. Several Sums of Money, it was not doubted, would be lent without Interest, by Well-wishers to so useful a Design. Trustees of Reputation, out of every Denomination in *London*, were chosen accordingly, who condescended to accept the Trust. And I obliged myself and my Successors to the Library, to accommodate any Country Ministers with Books out of it gratis, they paying only five Shillings a Year towards Carriage; and this I did in Confidence and Consideration of the Money to be thus lent. But tho' the Plan gave such a Compass of Reading, in a growing Library of valuable Books, for so small an Expence, to those, whose Station of Life made it desirable to consult, what, at the same Time, their Circumstances, generally speaking, would not admit them to buy: Yet no Money was then advanced to promote it, except about ten Guinea's by the Trustees themselves, who were partly Ministers and partly Lay-Gentlemen; which Sum was scarce enough to defray the Expence of my Journey up and down, of my Residence here to solicit the Affair, with the Charge of Supplies in my Absence from *Salisbury*, and of Writings to settle the said Trust. However, the reasonable Prospect and Hopes of being supported, first or last, in a Plan so beneficial to the Ministers in the Country, and so well

* Should it be suggested, that my *Religious Principles* were a Prejudice unto me. I answer; So are those of every Dissenting Protestant in the Kingdom with some, if he dares to think and to speak what he thinks. Witness the Corporation and Test Acts.—But did they not hurt your Subscriptions amongst your own People? I know no Reason why they should. I ever firmly believed the *Christian Oracles*; and held them as the Sacred Rule of my Faith and Practice: And I treated every one as a *Christian*, who did the same. Not that I remember one who withdrew his Subscription on Account of my Sentiments. This I'm sure of, the best, and in a Manner, the only Legacy I ever had, was left me by one of my own People; who threatned indeed to withdraw his Subscription, before he understood what my Principles were, but never did it.—Why, it may be said, don't you deny the *Prescience* or *Fore-Knowledge* of God? And this, however, is, we assure you, a Prejudice to you here. I answer; If I deny God's Fore-Knowledge, it is more than I myself know. I never deny'd that God fore-knows whatever will be. And who is there, that affirmeth more? What is the Offence then? Only this; I say, with many Thousands of my Brethren, that our accountable Actions were once free, or what we could have prevented; but that none can prevent what will be. And therefore that our accountable free Actions were not always Actions, that would be, but were once only possible, what might or might not have

well approved of by Gentlemen of Character in the City, determin'd me to go on encreasing my Library, and consequently my Debt.

V.

BUT when I found myself quite forgot, and left to struggle with these growing Difficulties alone, (a) I propos'd to divide my Books among a certain Number of Subscribers, at half a Guinea a Lot; leaving it to every one's Option, either to take to his Lot, when known, or to exchange it for a Year's Use of the future Library, which would be half a Guinea a Year to other Subscribers. Thus, while none could be Losers, every one had a Chance of the highest Lot, and so to be a considerable Gainer.—Three noted Counsellors gave it under their Hands, that as in this Division of the Books there could be no Blanks or Loss to any; so it was no prohibited Lottery.

Had the Attempt met with any favourable Support from this great City, in the midst of Diversions much more expensive, I had at once extricated myself out of all my Embarrassments; had established a yet nobler Library for the Use of the Country Ministers; and by the Subscription of my other Readers could not only have subsisted with Comfort and Reputation myself at *Salisbury*, but have made daily Additions to the Collection of Books there.—But after a very great Expence to make the Experiment, the greater Part of the Tickets lay upon my Hands.—I caus'd, notwithstanding, the Division to be made; and to prevent Reflections, to be made by the Subscribers themselves in that City: And I afterwards notified to every one his particular Lot; acquainting them, that whoever sent for their Lots, must take to them, and pay the Expence of Carriage.—And how often have I publicly invited such as have not as yet had their Lots, or a Year's Reading in lieu of them, to make their proper Demands, that they might have a reasonable Satisfaction.

The Severity of the following Winter, the extraordinary Price of Corn, and the Deadness of Trade, did, in a great Measure, take off the Taste of my Subscribers for Reading in the *new Library*. This determin'd me to dispose of my Books to the best Advantage. At *Salisbury* they would yield nothing. There was a Necessity to remove them to *London*. However, as the Year of some Readers was not quite expired, I took care to inform them, they should either be supplied the Remainder of their Year from hence, on the same Terms; or be allowed for the remaining Time. But several of them chose rather, in an arbitrary Way, to keep back the Books in their Hands, as an Equivalent; and then to complain they were not well supplied. Whereas no one had a Right to a fresh Supply, but upon a Return of those in Hand. This was the greater Hardship upon me, because they hereby detained the Lots of other Adventurers, and oblig'd me to buy new Books in their Stead, perhaps at double the Price.

VI.

I COMMUNICATED my Intentions of removing to my People; and left them to their Liberty, either to chuse another Minister immediately, or to give me Half a Year's Time to see, whether I could dispose of my Library here, in such a Manner, as might enable me to pay my Debts, and to return with some Prospect of living comfortably among them. They unanimously chose to wait a while.

I hereupon hired a convenient and well situated House in *London*; and advertised my *Design* to open my Library, viz. *Michaelmas*, 1742. But when I came hither, the House that I was told before was ready, could not be fitted up for my Purpose 'till near *Christmas*. This lost me a great Part of the Season. Besides, the Trade which had agreed to supply me with Books upon Return in the Country, took it in their Heads, that tho' my Library tended greatly to encrease the Number of Readers, and a Love of Reading; it wou'd obstruct the Sale and Consumption of their Books: Who therefore (tho' they live by the *Liberty of the Press*, and the *Diffusion of Knowledge*) did, in an unprecedented Manner, so far influence the publick Papers, that I could not *duly* advertise the opening of it. So that many concluded the Design was dropt, which some of my Rivals in circulating Books, industriously countenanced and spread abroad.—

This very much perplexed my Affairs, and obstructed the Execution of what I had principally in View; which was to have got first a good Subscription to my Library in Town, and by virtue of that Subscription to have disposed of it to some *Librarian* or other, to a much better Advantage than at any Auction; and then to have returned to my Congregation again.—I little thought that a free People, naturally

(a) I would not be thought by this, to forget the generous Benefactions receiv'd at several Times, for the Benefit of my aged Father and other Branches of a ruin'd Family. They are gratefully remembered, and thankfully acknowledged. A deep Sense of such Obligations made any Scheme for the Good of the Community the more pleasing to me, as it might give me an Opportunity to provide for my own private Necessities, in the Service of the Publick. And I should the rather rejoice in the Success of the present Scheme, as it might be made of singular Advantage to the Country Ministers still, *London* being the Center of a more extensive Communication; and as it might possibly put me into a Capacity to leave such a Number of Shares for their Use, as might serve at least an immense

turally jealous of their *Liberties*, and inquisitive after *Knowledge*, would have suffered such an Outrage upon the Rights of Mankind by any Combination of Men soever. What a mean Badge, thought I, must it be of Popish Slavery, to have the Key of Knowledge at others Disposal! Shall a Privilege we could scarce bear the *Legislature* itself to take from us, be in the Power of any single Set of Men to deprive us of! Men, who live upon the Brains, and the vital Blood of the Authors of that very Knowledge, which they thus take upon them to suppress at Pleasure; or to dispense to their fellow Subjects upon such Terms only, as not one in five Hundred, who desire and need that Knowledge, can comply with! Shall *some* have a Licence to lampoon the Government, and to libel every Thing that's virtuous and sacred, every Week! While *another* has the hard Lot to be denied an *Advertisement* to acquaint the Public, *where*, and in *what State* that Library is, which the Public had a Right to know; and many others, as well as myself, were Sufferers by the Concealment of!

VII.

HOWEVER, as it became an Offence to some weak Minds, that a *Minister* should be at the Head of a circulating Library, while it was ever deemed an *Honour* to be a *Librarian* to a standing one, notwithstanding the heterogeneous Mixture to be found in both; an Expedient was proposed, which was not liable to this Objection, at least no more than one Year. (c). The Expedient was this, A Number of Subscriptions to be raised by such as were Friends to our Brethren in the Country, or to the Communication of Knowledge; for which every Subscriber might read a Year, if he pleased, as an Equivalent. And after that, the Books to be sequestered and repositied in some public Library, suppose in that of *Red-Cross Street*, under the Care of the same Trustees, for the Benefit of the Country Ministers, as above, or for such other Uses as they in their Wisdom shou'd judge most proper. But every Proposal for my Relief had the Misfortune to be construed wrong, or neglected; who fled for Refuge to this great City, and was advised to do so, by some of the chief of my Brethren here, that more intimately knew my Case. A late worthy Doctor || particularly said, "Prithee come up; and don't stay starving there. Here are five Guinea's towards the Charge of your Removal; and I give them upon this Condition, that you remove. Thou shalt frequently preach for me, and that not without a Gratiuity." But this took a very different Turn.

I resolved at length patiently to submit; and if I sunk, to sink alone. I would not return to *Salisbury* to pluck down an Interest, I had been building up for 20 Years past. I had the Satisfaction afterwards, to be an Instrument in healing the Breach that was made after my Removal, and in settling their present Minister unanimously among them.

VIII.

A PRINCIPLE of Self-Preservation, however, led me to consider, whether there were no other Means yet in my Power, to enable me to walk honestly towards them that are without, and that I might have lack of no Man. Another Proposal was therefore offered to the World, very advantageous to the Public, without being injurious to any, of Benefits to be decided by the *State Lottery*. The Scheme was universally applauded, as to the Fairness of the Proposal, and wou'd probably have succeeded, had not the Government threatened a Prosecution of all private Lotteries. The Adventurer in this wou'd have had for every Shilling, a Chance of new Books, of his own chusing, to the Amount of 5*l*, 20*l*, 30*l*, 50*l*, nay an Hundred Pounds more than his Subscription, and at worst was sure of Books to the full Value of his Shilling. But when I was made sensible of my Danger from above, I submitted the Plan, with my Reasons for the Legality of it, to the Directors and Managers of the *State Lottery*; and since they advised it, declared off. The Letter wrote to them upon this Occasion, I have cast into the Margin (c). BUT

(c) Some Tares will (as has been observed elsewhere) unavoidably intermix with the most useful and entertaining Collection. But why should this turn to my Reproach, any more than any other Repository of mixed Books, to the Reproach of another Librarian? We have no Hand in chusing such Rubbish, but only to take down and put up, what others have chose and purchased for public Use. Besides, are not such heterogeneous Mixtures to be found in almost every private Study, and Bookseller's Shop? Nay, are not such Books to be met with among the purest Classics, that are read in Universities and private Schools? I might add; And are not Youth, in their unguarded Years, and when the Incentives to Lust are strongest, sometimes compelled to treasure up in their Memories the filthy Stories of the Pagan Deities, &c? Yet since the Wheat that grows with such Tares, could not so well be preserved, without some Intermixture of these Weeds, neither [Librarian, Tutor,] Tradesman, Gentleman or Divine have ever (as I remember) been censured by the most judicious or tender Casuist on this Account.—In a State of Liberty and Freedom, Error as well as Truth, Vice as well as Virtue, will find an Opportunity to [speak for themselves]: But Truth and Goodness want only a fair Hearing, and an Impartial Audience.

|| Dr. W———.

(d) To the Honourable GENTLEMEN, the MANAGERS and DIRECTORS of the Present LOTTERY.

Gentlemen,

BY an Advertisement from the Lottery-Office in Duke-street, Westminster, dated the 15th of this Instant, you are informed, That all Offenders against the several Acts relating to unlawful Lotteries, will be

BUT since my *Library* could not now be disposed of by *Lot*, I was advised to make it the *Joint Property* of the Subscribers, under certain Rules of Circulation: Which would perpetuate the Use of the *Library* to others, without any Disadvantage to the Librarian.

The Substance of the PLAN is this.

" WHEREAS Gentlemen and Ladies have given a Guinea a Year several Years together for the bare Use of the present *Library*, a better *Library* now becomes their common Property, and circulates among them for one Guinea only. This Property is about to be vested in the Hands of Trustees, of their own chusing, out of their own Body. There is indeed *Twelve-Pence* a Quarter to be paid besides to continue their Right; which, if the Number be compleated, (and so in Proportion) will maintain a Librarian, pay the Rent of convenient Rooms, defray the Expence of Catalogues, and bring in, as an additional Property, sixty or eighty Pounds of new Books every Year; which will, with the rest, descend to them and their Assigns for ever.

The *Catalogue* will be very large. It is printed off in Parts, because I design to increase the Collection of Books under the following Letters of the Alphabet, in some Proportion to the Encouragement of new Subscribers. The first Volume is finished, and consists of above 500 Pages. Every Proprietor will be entitled to a complete Catalogue; the several Parts of which as work'd off, will be distributed among them for their present Use. The *Titles* are copious, that every one may know the leading Design of each Book; and by the Help of a well-adjusted *Index* to be annexed to the Catalogue, may see at one View, what there

is

The Proposers for dividing of Books to a certain Value, by the *State Lottery*, hope they shall not be deemed Offenders against the said Acts, nor be in Danger of a Prosecution from your Board; and beg Leave humbly to lay before you the Reasons of this their Confidence.

They are very sensible, there are "unlawful Games, called *Lotteries*, by which evil-disposed Persons have got to themselves great Sums of Money, to the utter Ruin and Impoverishment of many Families;" as is set forth in the Preamble to the said Acts: And that the Government has thought fit to declare all such *Lotteries* common and publick Nuisances. — They are equally sensible, that all such *Lotteries* as are common and publick Nuisances, may not be determined by the *State Lottery*, nor in any other Shape whatsoever.

But as their intended Division of Books will appear, by their printed Proposals, to be injurious to none, while it is beneficial to many, the lowest Lot being a full Equivalent for the Subscribers Money; the Proposers humbly conceive you will not judge it within the real Intent and Meaning of the said Acts; and therefore, whatever the Rule of Decision may be, whether a private or publick *Lottery*, they persuade themselves, it will not, in your Honours Opinion, make any Alteration in their Case. — And they are the more confirmed in their Apprehensions herein, from the Opinion of several Learned in the Law in a Case exactly Parallel. A certain *Library* was divided publickly by Lots, (after all these Acts were made) and the lowest Lot was made equal to every one's Subscription, by a Liberty to exchange it for a full Equivalent in the Use of a Reading *Library*: As in the present Case, the several Blanks in the *State Lottery* are made Saving Lots in this, by a Liberty granted to every such Subscriber to take periodical Pamphlets, called, *The Universal Miscellany*, or, *The Literary Magazine*, as they are publish'd, to the full Amount of their Subscription.

Now, Gentlemen, the Proposer of the said Division of Books being unwilling to do any Thing therein but what was right and legal, consulted Counsel upon the Affair. You'll indulge us so far as to hear their Opinion in their own Words, under their Hands: All eminent in their Profession.

" I am of Opinion, says one of the said Gentlemen, that if the Subscribers should divide these Articles by Lots, among themselves, it will not be contrary to the Intent and Meaning of those Acts, nor can be deem'd to fall within any of the Inconveniences, or ill Practices intended to be prevented thereby."

" I am of Opinion, says another of them, that the Method above proposed, for the Sale and Division of the *Library*, is fair and just: Neither is it contrary to the Intent of any of the Acts made to prohibit *Lotteries*."

" Upon reading the Advertisement, says a third, for erecting a new publick *Library* by Subscription, I conceive that nothing therein contained can be deemed illegal, or a prohibited *Lottery*."

Thus, Gentlemen, we were made to understand, that not the Letter of the said Acts, but the Intent and Meaning of them is Law; and that not every Decision by Lots, but only such *Lotteries* as are common and publick Nuisances are prohibited by the said Act. Accordingly, nothing is more usual, necessary and allowable, in a Course of Trade, than for Joint-Purchasers, first to divide a Commodity into unequal, but saving Shares, and then to determine by Lots, what their respective Shares shall be.

Since therefore the End or Intent of those penal Laws against common and publick Nuisances is not evaded hereby, nor the Legislature affronted, nor any of his Majesty's Subjects injured; we assure ourselves, Gentlemen, that the said Laws will not, under a Government so renowned for Justice and Clemency, be stretched to ruin those, who are only seeking their private Interest in the common Good, especially of the more studious, whether in the Law, Physick, or Divinity, or in any other Branch of Literature, without the least Injury to any: For the Subscribers will have new Books, of their own chusing, to the Value of near 3000*l.* as they are now advertised at, distributed among the Fortunate, while the Rest will have *Miscellanies* or *Magazines* to the full Value of their Subscription, as they are, or shall be usually sold for, as has been already observed by,

Gentlemen,

Your most obedient, humble Servant,

is in the whole *Library* to assist him in any particular Study, so far as the Title-Pages, and (sometimes) the principal Contents, can direct him. By this Means the *Catalogue* itself will be as it were a short *Epitome* of the *Library*, and give the *Reader* a general, but entertaining Idea of the several Branches of Learning and Amusement *there*, before he reads the Books that contain them.

Now, as the Design is evidently of general Use, and of publick Utility, the Favour I earnestly and humbly entreat, is, the Patronage and Encouragement of the generous Part of Mankind, and the Lovers of Universal Literature, that neither the *Design* itself, nor the *Contriver* of it, may be crushed by the narrow Views of any: A Design built upon a PLAN so fairly drawn up, and so clear of any avaricious Views, that none have yet attempted to *imitate* or *expose* it, tho' it hath been submitted two Years and more to the Animadversions of the Public. And that the Number of Subscribers has not been full long ago, must, I think, (next to the general Panic raised by the late Rebellion) be imputed to nothing else, but to the *not knowing*, or *not attending* to the Nature and Advantage of the Design; or to a *Suspicion* that there is no firm Resolution in me to execute it. Whereas it is my steady Purpose, founded upon a common and mutual Interest to prosecute by *honourable Means* what I have begun.

The Testimonials from the Minister where I was born, from the Ministers that ordained me, and from the People where I last lived, will, I doubt not, have their proper Weight for this End. It may look like Boasting to transcribe them; yet Justice to my own Person, to my Family, to my Brethren, to my private and publick Character, may make it expedient at this Time. *Let no Man therefore think me a Fool; if otherwise, yet as a Fool suffer me — a little.*

The Testimonial from the Minister where I was born, runs thus;

“WHEREAS my Thoughts and Opinion of Mr. Samuel Fancourt of Hungerford (who is now an Expectant of Admission by solemn Ordination into the sacred Office of a Minister of the Gospel) are desired: These may certify, that from my own Knowledge of him, and intimate Conversation with him, I am so well satisfied of his natural Capacity for, his acquired Improvements in, and Industry in pursuing further Measures of all Learning useful for the Ministry, and withal of his serious Piety, and unblameable Conversation, together with his propense and ardent Desire to serve Christ in the Ministry of the Gospel; that I greatly rejoice at the near Approach of his Ordination, and hope he will be a singular Ornament and Blessing in that sacred Office, wheresoever God in his Providence shall please to employ him.

To which Testimony in all Seriousness and Sincerity, I freely subscribe my Name,

May 11, 1709.

ROBERT EKINS,

Minister of the Gospel in Okeham.”

The Testimonial from the Ministers who ordained me, is as follows;

“THIS may certify, that Mr. Samuel Fancourt, after due Trials and Examination, and Satisfaction received of his Qualifications and Abilities, and the Testimony of his known Piety and good Conversation, was solemnly ordained at Hungerford in Berkshire, by Fasting and Prayer, and Imposition of Hands, to the sacred Office and Work of the Ministry, on the twenty-fourth of May, 1709.—Which is attested on personal Knowledge by us,

Jere. Smith,
Ben. Merryman,
H. Davison,
James Peirce,
Jacob Ball.”

That from the People where I last lived, concludes.

Sarum, 4th September, 1742.

“WHEREAS the Rev. Mr. Fancourt, our worthy Pastor, is engaged in an Affair, which will probably require his Attendance in London for six or seven Months, during which Time he has undertaken to provide for us a Supply to our Satisfaction: We who are Trustees of the Lands of the Congregation, do hereby certify,

That (in Consideration of the eminent Services of our said Minister amongst us, particularly in making free our Place of Publick Worship, and erecting a commodious Dwelling House for our Ministers in all Times to come, of which we retain the most grateful Sense) the Body of the People at a Publick Meeting, did, at the Request of the said Mr. Fancourt, unanimously consent to his absenting himself on the Occasion, and for the Time aforesaid. And we do hereby declare, that if Providence shall so order his Affairs, as to direct his Return to us again, we will gladly receive him. Witness our Hands

Joseph Burden, Tho. Dyke,
John Feake, J. Feake, Jun.
John Merriis, William Moore, Jun.
John Carpenter, Tho. Mitchel.

I was not present at the public Meeting above mentioned; but I am satisfied, that what the Trustees here